



Beaulieu Residential

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Residue

Consumers who sincerely care about the long-term appearance and performance of their carpet are apt to have it professionally cleaned according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Today, the majority of carpet manufacturers warranties require that their carpet be cleaned every twelve to twenty four months by the hot-water extraction method. Hot-water extraction cleaning is the most endorsed cleaning method in the carpet industry. When used correctly, hot-water extraction provides consumers with the most effective method to clean carpet and leaves the least amount of residue. Any carpet that has been cleaned and maintained using a system that does not remove residue becomes an ideal breeding ground for allergens. To prevent problems associated with improper maintenance methods and products, carpet manufacturers have taken a stand that their carpets be cleaned using only those products that carry The Carpet and Rug Institute's Seal of Approval (SOA). The CRI's SOA certification program ensures that cleaning equipment and in-tank cleaning solution products that carry the SOA seal have been tested and certified for demonstrating a high level of cleaning performance with very little residue.

In the past, homeowners would often procrastinate scheduling cleaning of their new carpet out of fear that cleaning residues would damage their investment. Residue generally refers to the amount of un-recovered spent cleaning solution that is left behind after the cleaning process. Cleaning solution residues are responsible for rapid re-soiling. However, when done correctly, the hot-water extraction cleaning method is far and away ahead of the other carpet cleaning methods in this regard since it is capable of recovering up to 95% of the cleaning solution and soil present in a carpet. Other carpet cleaning methods such as the Spin Bonnet, various dry powders and rotary scrubs provide very little in the way of recovery and are thus notorious for the amount of residue they leave behind after cleaning.

Recovery is most effective when the least amount of warm water and cleaning solution necessary to clean a carpet is used. Some cleaning methods rely on high temperature drip-feeds to bring their water and cleaning solution together, and require greater amounts of the cleaning solution to complete the process. It has been proven time and time again that this approach can result in high amounts of soil-attracting residue left in a carpet after cleaning. And the higher temperature slows the drying time, which is an added inconvenience. Water temperature during cleaning should not exceed 150 degrees Fahrenheit.

Residue from overwetting after cleaning can also occur. In some cases, overwetting has shown to be the result of the cleaner using high-velocity vacuums that have so much lift they would pull the carpet into the vacuum head, thus restricting the amount of air flow actually needed for adequate recovery of the cleaning solution.

Another problem associated with residue is wicking. Residues left in a carpet after cleaning is not always immediately apparent. However, as a carpet dries after cleaning, any residue left behind will wick back up to the fiber tips, resulting in spots and stains that reappear as new dark areas on the carpet. If spots and stains appear or reappear within a few days after cleaning the problem is due to wicking. Wicking can be avoided by not over-wetting a carpet during cleaning, by using a pre-spray (which allows the carpet care technician to use fewer solution passes), and by increasing the number of vacuum passes.

Wicking can also occur due to the use of highly alkaline cleaning solutions. The more alkaline a cleaning solution is the more effective it tends to be. The flipside of this coin is that the higher the alkalinity of a cleaning solution the more difficult it is to thoroughly extract after cleaning. Cleaning solution (detergent) residues tend to be very sticky soil attractors and are one of the leading causes of wicking complaints. When a carpet has been exposed to excessively high pH detergents and/or amounts of detergents the carpet often requires treatment using an organic acid as a neutralizing agent. Ideally cleaning solutions should not exceed a pH of 9.

Clean carpets have little residue, dry faster, can be put to use again quicker, maintain their appearance longer, and tend to be more resilient to traffic.

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